

and gushed through the sashes
forming a pond where the floor
is worn in front of the sink

this morning the tractor
used for repairing the gravel road
conked out at the bottom of the hill

its operator sat on a front tire
swinging his legs as he munched
a soft white sandwich

his teeth were as broken
as the gears of his rig

he found a cigarette but no matches
threw the cigarette down
kicked the tire and cursed
linking his tractor
with an act of sexual perversion

I kept walking walking and somehow
kept thinking of you

-- Franz Douskey

Tucson AZ

Down Along The Cove

At Albertus Runyun College
In the days of giant sloths
There lived a race of people
Who lived on pumpkin broth

And all their friends
From miles around
Would gather when they sang
For apples, pears, and spark plugs
And other useless whang

They gave them to their animals
To kick amongst themselves
And went back out a-singing
To line their pumpkin shelves

But somewhere down along the cove
The dylans lurked with banjos
And as the pumpkin people passed
They turned them into mangoes

Tales Of Elva Farnum

Strange that I didn't own sunglasses
In those days

Sitting on the step with Jim
With me watching the pond
And Jim not even looking at it
And the sun beaming down
On me wearing my straw hat
And Jim not wearing a hat at all

And when I could get him to put down
"Sgt. Rock & Easy Co."
We looked at each other
And laughed
With tales of Elva Farnum
And the Mills queers
Until absurd with joy
We raided the refrigerator
For ice cream with sauce

And after numbing our laughers
We went up to the road
And bounced the hardball

Up there I didn't have to watch the pond
And Jim didn't have to not look at it

-- Benjamin S. Blake

Willimantic CT

Empathy

Events, if they are remote and terrible enough, resonate at frequencies too high for human reception. Those catastrophic earthquakes, for example, which always occur in Diyarbakir or Quetta, places that have never really existed. Then too, if it had not been fifty-thousand victims, but only four victims, or nineteen -- some human figure.

A moment ago, a short walk from where I sit, I was confronted by a chilling sight: a tortured praying mantis wriggling helplessly in the fingers of an amused child.